

Yesterday was a good day in the House of Representatives. I urge my colleagues in the Senate to take swift action this week to also pass this legislation and to send it to the President.

CNN HOST SAYS MEDIA BIASED

(Mr. SMITH of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, Howard Kurtz, host of CNN's program "Reliable Sources," has strongly criticized the media's coverage of Senator BARACK OBAMA's breaking his promise that he would accept public campaign funds.

Last Sunday, Kurtz argued: "All of these liberal commentators who have always supported campaign finance reform, getting big money out of politics, many of them are defending OBAMA. And I have to think the press is cutting him a break here."

Kurtz concluded the segment by saying, "If George W. Bush had done this, blown off public financing as he considered doing during the 2004 campaign, there would be howls in the media about one candidate trying to buy an election."

A recent poll found that, by more than a 3-to-1 margin, voters believe the media favors Senator BARACK OBAMA over Senator JOHN MCCAIN. The media should report the facts, not slant the news.

EXPLORING, ELIMINATING AND ENCOURAGING

(Mr. PERLMUTTER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, there have been a lot of complaints by the Republican side of the aisle as to the increase in gas prices, but I would have to say: Is it any wonder that gas prices have increased with two oil men in the White House? The question is what is being done. I would say it is the three E's.

First, explore the 68 million acres that are under lease to the oil companies today. Let's extract the oil that we have under lease and not go explore ANWR or the Outer Continental Shelf.

Two, eliminate the gouging and the hoarding and the speculating that is going on that is increasing the price of oil per barrel by \$60 or \$70 per barrel.

The third E, encourage alternatives. We can no longer be hooked on just one commodity. We have to have other approaches and other ways to power this Nation or we will have to learn this lesson over and over and over again. That is what the Democratic Congress is doing—exploring what we have, eliminating the gouging and encouraging alternatives.

BOY SCOUT TRAGEDY AT LITTLE SIOUX RANCH

(Mr. FORTENBERRY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Mr. Speaker, I would like to commend my colleague Congressman LEE TERRY for introducing the resolution expressing heartfelt sympathy for the victims and families following the tornado that hit Little Sioux, Iowa.

On June 11, we were given a stark reminder of just how fragile life is. In 1 minute, the Boy Scouts at the Little Sioux Scout Ranch were attending a leadership camp. Boy Scouts undoubtedly filled with joy, laughter and achievement, all of those wonderful things that make scouting a core ideal of America. In the next minute, a tornado tore through the camp, taking the lives of 4 Boy Scouts and injuring 40 others.

The four scouts who lost their lives—Aaron Eilerts from West Point, Nebraska, and Josh Fennen, Sam Thomsen and Ben Petrzilka from Omaha—were exemplary young men.

After the tornado struck, many other young men applied first aid to the injured and worked to free those trapped in the rubble. Clearly, the scouts lived up to their motto, "Be prepared."

Mr. Speaker, may God bring comfort to the families and friends of those who lost loved ones that day.

HONORING OFFICER JOSE RIVERA

(Mr. CARDOZA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. CARDOZA. Mr. Speaker, it is with great sadness that I rise today to honor the late Jose Rivera, a correctional officer at the Federal penitentiary in Atwater, California.

Officer Rivera's life was taken by two inmates on Friday, June 20, 2008. He was 22 years old. He is survived by his mother, Terry, by his sisters Teresa, Martha and Angelica and by his brother, Daniel.

After graduating from Le Grand High School, he served for 4 years in the Navy, completing two tours of duty in Iraq, and he began his career as a correctional officer on August 5, 2007. His life of service was cut tragically short.

Mr. Speaker, I have long voiced my concerns, most recently in a letter I sent in April to the director of the Bureau of Prisons, about the lack of sufficient resources and staff to safely operate our Federal prisons.

The fact is that staffing levels are decreasing while inmate populations are increasing. The Atwater Penitentiary is operating at 85 percent of the staffing level and is at 25 percent overcapacity for inmate levels.

As we honor Officer Rivera's legacy of commitment and service to our country, his senseless death is a reminder that we must provide adequate funds to keep our prisons and our communities safe.

REDUCE PRICE AT THE PUMP

(Mrs. BLACKBURN asked and was given permission to address the House

for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, in middle Tennessee today, you are going to pay about \$3.93 for a gallon of gas. My constituent families know that this price is outrageous, and they know that now they are being faced with choices: How much are they going to put in the tank or how much are they going to put in that grocery cart when they go to the grocery store? This is unacceptable, and my constituents know that.

They also know that there are some things that we could and should be doing. May I offer a suggestion to that, Mr. Speaker. Here is a simple way to start:

To the Democrat leadership, admit you made a mistake, and repeal the so-called Energy Independence and Security Act that you passed last December that didn't produce one bit of oil or gas or move anything to the marketplace. It put in place roadblocks, and we have far too many roadblocks to putting gas into the pumps and into our cars.

Specifically, let's repeal section 526 of this so-called Energy Policy Act, and let's get rid of a roadblock that makes it more difficult for the U.S. Government to address the needs that we have and, certainly, for our Air Force.

There are many things that we could and should be doing before we leave for July 4. There are things that we could and should be doing to make certain that our constituents have a safer July 4th celebration.

Let's reduce the price at the pump.

DEMOCRATS HELP REBUILD ECONOMY

(Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, with the price of groceries, gasoline and health care rising every day, Americans everywhere are feeling the economic squeeze. They worry about losing their jobs and their homes, and they fear losing their standard of living.

The Democratic Congress has led the way in working to jump start the American economic recovery by approving \$107 billion in stimulus checks that have already reached 76 million homes.

With job losses exceeding 324,000 this year, with 48,000 having been lost in the month of May alone, we acted quickly last week to extend unemployment benefits for millions of workers who are having a hard time finding a job. These benefits will help struggling families put food on the table and gas in their cars.

Congress has passed the most comprehensive legislation responding to the devastating housing crisis. The package will help millions of families avoid foreclosure, and it will rehabilitate properties in areas hit hard by the housing crisis.